

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 are pending in this application. Claims 11-13 have been added.

The Office Action dated March 2, 2005, has been received and carefully reviewed. In that Office Action, claims 1-6 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kaneshige. Claims 1-10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Ishiguro. Because it is believed that claims 1-13 are patentable over the references of record, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-13 is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Ishiguro. The filing date of Ishiguro is May 7, 2003. Submitted herewith is a verified English translation of Japanese Patent Application JP 2002-283755 filed September 27, 2002, upon which priority is claimed in the present application. Because the present application has an earlier filing date than Ishiguro, it is respectfully submitted that Ishiguro no longer qualifies as prior art and should be withdrawn as a reference.

Claim 1 also stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kaneshige. Claim 1 requires an image forming apparatus including a main body and a plurality of functional units having certain image-forming capabilities. Each of the functional units has attachment/detachment order controlling means for preventing the other functional unit from being attached or

detached in an order different from a predetermined order. Kaneshige includes a functional unit 5 (a developer unit) and a functional unit 8 (an image forming unit) and a sliding block 15 that prevents developer unit 5 from being inserted before image forming unit 8 is in place. However, functional units 5 and 8 do not include attachment/detachment order controlling means as required by claim 1. Attachment/detachment control is performed by a separate element, sliding block 15. Sliding block 15, however, is not a functional unit as required by claim 1. Because Kaneshige does not show or suggest a plurality of functional units having attachment/detachment order controlling means as required by claim 1, claim 1 is submitted to be allowable over this reference.

Claim 2 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kaneshige. Claim 2 requires an image forming apparatus comprising an image forming main body, a process frame body and a development device, wherein the process frame body and the development device are attachable to and removable from the image forming main body in a predetermined order. The process frame body and the development device each have attachment/detachment order controlling means for preventing the process frame body and the development device from being attached and detached in an order different from the predetermined order. As argued above in connection with claim 1, Kaneshige discloses the use of a sliding block 15 to prevent one unit from being inserted

into an image forming device before another unit. Kaneshige does not disclose a process frame body having attachment/detachment means and a development device having attachment/detachment means as claimed. Claim 2 is therefore submitted to be allowable over Kaneshige.

Claims 3-10 depend from claim 2 and are submitted to be allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 2.

New claim 11 is also submitted to be allowable over the art of record. Claim 11 requires an image forming apparatus that includes a main body with an opening for receiving first and second functional units, a first functional unit received in the opening and having a guide structure and a release mechanism and a second functional unit received in the opening and comprising a guide element received in the guide structure and a first portion, wherein the first portion is configured to cover the release mechanism when the first functional unit and the second functional unit are properly installed in said opening and to prevent said first functional unit from being installed in said opening after said second functional unit is installed in said opening. Neither functional unit of Kaneshige includes a first portion configured to cover a release mechanism on the second functional unit and prevent the first functional unit from being installed after the second functional unit is installed in the opening. Claim 11 is therefore

submitted to be allowable over this reference and the other references of record.

Claims 12 and 13 depend from claim 11 and are therefore submitted to be allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 11.

Conclusion

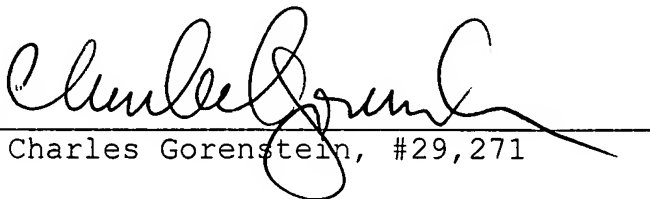
Each issue raised in the Office Action dated March 2, 2005, has been addressed and it is believed that claims 1-11 are in condition for allowance. Wherefore, reconsideration and allowance of these claims is earnestly solicited.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Scott Wakeman (Reg. No. 37,750) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment(s): Verified English translation of JP 2002-283755